

TO: The Zoning Board of Appeals

FROM: Jo Anne Preston, Town Meeting member, Precinct 5

I request that you deny the 1021-1025 Mass. Ave. Comprehensive Permit Application. I find the applicant's proposal flawed for the following reasons:

- The developer asks to be exempt from the tree preservation bylaws which requires a Tree Plan and payment into the Trees Please Fund for trees removed. The developer cites lack of feasibility for his large project without removal of 80-100 trees (last count known to me) and he would be impoverished by paying into the tree fund.
- 1. The developer could build a smaller building without the removal of a large number of trees. The scope of the project is overly large and not in keeping with the needs to preserve the tree canopy which the town has supported for many years.
- 2. The developer has not presented any evidence of what he would make in profits and how it might not allow him to pay into the tree fund. Without the any numbers it would be impossible to give this claim any credence.
- The developer suggests that the majority of trees are non-native and thus implies that they need to be removed.
- 1. The state urges that everyone try to plant native species as they do better in our climate. Nowhere in their statutes and other materials do they ask that non-native trees be removed.
- 2. If by non-native the developer is referring to Norway Maples, which can be found in large numbers on our public streets in Arlington, they are, indeed, on the states prohibited plants and trees list. However, the state explicitly writes "that it does not affect existing plants and trees in the existing landscape. Only the importation, sale, propagation and related activities for the listed plants and trees are effected." In other words, the trees and plants on their list should not be removed but new ones should not be planted.
- The removal of such a large number of trees contradicts the town efforts to prevent and eliminate "hot spots." Hot spots are in areas in our town, which in the summer, register temperature considerably higher than the surrounding areas. Five years ago, BU scholars studied Arlington and found hot spots which coincided with a lack of trees. In 2020, Arlington received a grant to map the hot spots in our town. Again, they found them to have few trees. These data comport with national studies.
- 1. The area of development is not yet among the hottest areas in Arlington. However, with cutting down so many mature trees and constructing a very large

building in an area which is already warmer in the summer than many others, a hot spot is certain to develop.

2. Arlington has now received a large grant to address these heat islands. To create the conditions that will produce a heat island contradicts the efforts of the town to eliminate them. Town Manager, Sandy Pooler, promises that the town “will be moving into action, finding ways to cool the hottest parts of our region...” He wants “to thwart the quiet natural disaster of extreme heat.” To cut down a large number of mature trees, which scientist have found cause pockets of extreme heat in built up areas, negates the purposes of this grant and the town commitment to it.
3. Extreme heat islands do not just make residents uncomfortable, they also threaten their health and even their lives. As the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program reminds us: “Although hurricanes and wildfires get more attention, summer heat waves actually harm and kill people.”

For these reasons and many more, I urge you to deny the Comprehensive Permit Application.